21 Questions to Ask Your Oncologist

by

Matt Ellefson
CEO/Founder of SURVIVEiT®
My cancer diagnosis was the toughest challenge I’ve ever encountered in my life.

I knew about cancer, had friends and loved ones who lost their lives to cancer, but never in a million years did I think it would happen to me. So obviously, I wasn’t prepared. Why would I be?

People don’t study cancer in preparation of receiving a diagnosis someday. None of us ever think it will happen to us because cancer is something that happens to other people, right? Wrong!

**Approximately 41% of men and women in America will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime.**

Most people I’ve spoken to are shocked to hear that statistic. And if you’re reading this guide, chances are you’ve already been affected by cancer in some way.

Now what?

SURVIVEiT®’s vision is a world free from the fear of cancer. We chose this vision because with cancer, fear is enemy number one. And most of our fear comes from
the unknown: The unknown effects of cancer, the unknown diagnostic options, the unknown treatment options, and the unknown path to survivorship.

When armed with the right knowledge, these fears fade away allowing you to develop the best plan for your condition and get on the path to survivorship.

That’s why I want to share this resource with you. Because your journey starts with knowing what questions to ask your oncologist.

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1. Exactly what type of cancer do I have?
2. What stage is my cancer in? What does that mean? How does my stage affect my options?
3. Is there any further testing that can be performed to better diagnose my cancer?
4. Was my biopsy analyzed for any specific gene mutation(s)?
5. Is there any further gene mutation testing that can be performed to more specifically diagnose my cancer?
6. How many gene mutations can you test for? (i.e. full panel ~46 genes at ~$2,500)
7. If the gene mutation testing is negative, what treatment options are available to me?
8. What do you recommend and why?
9. How can I learn more about this type of treatment?
10. What risks or side effects are there to the treatment(s) you suggest?
11. How would treatment affect my daily activities?
12. How is the treatment likely to help me?
13. When/how will we be able to know if it’s working?
14. What is the five-year survival rate for this type of treatment on my specific stage and condition?
15. Can you put me in contact with someone you treated with this treatment plan?
16. Are there any clinical trials I should consider?
17. What cancer center/university is doing the most research on my type of cancer? Can you refer me to this cancer/research center for a second opinion?
18. Should that cancer/research center offer a targeted treatment plan or clinical trial that you don’t offer, would you be willing to collaborate with them for follow-up care?
19. Based on what you’ve learned about my cancer, how long do you think I’ll live?
20. How do you recommend I share my hopes and expectations with my family?
21. What should I do to be ready for my next phase of treatment?

Notes:
How to Get Involved

SURVIVEiT® is a nonprofit and website developed by survivors for cancer patients.

At surviveit.org, anyone affected by cancer can:

• Locate the very best in cancer care
• View ratings and reviews of cancer centers posted by survivors
• Rate their own cancer care experiences
• Research their disease
• Strengthen their faith
• Support each other every step of the way

We know that finding the best care quickly is crucial to surviving cancer — and this is where you can help. Would you please take a moment to visit surviveit.org to Rate & Review the care you’ve received?

Thank you for partnering with us to create a world free from the fear of cancer.

Rate & Review

Like SURVIVEiT® or Join a Support Group

100% Tax-Deductible Donation

Rate & review the quality of care you or a loved has received at a cancer facility.

Get involved in a community that provides hope, knowledge, and resources crucial to surviving cancer.

Your support goes directly to providing resources to patients and their caregivers.